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THE
HERMIT:

A
SACRED ECLOGUE

IN IMITATION OF
THE SIXTH PASTORAL OF VIRGIL
INTITLED
SILENUS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED
A TRANSLATION OF THAT PASTORAL INTO ENGLISH VERSE

By J. Tytler.

441.

EDINBURGH.

Printed by the AUTHOR, and sold by D. OLIPHANT Bookseller head of the west Bow.

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T (H) E

HERMIT:

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SACRED E C C L O G U E.

THE ARGUMENT.

In the time of the Crusades, and irruption of the Moguls from the East, an hermit (by which word is here meant one who separates himself not from Society, but from the crimes and follies of it) being in danger of his life, because he would join with no party, flies to India, where he cultivates a spot near the mouth of the river Indus, employing his leisure hours in singing the praises of the deity. Some wandering exiles happen to pass near his plantation, and being taken with its beauty, advance towards it; but imagine that it is inhabited by some demon. While they remain in suspense on this account, they hear the hermit singing as usual. His voice, being multiplied by the echoes in that lonely place, they are frightened, and attempt to fly; but unawares rush into the presence of the hermit himself. He speaks to them, and dispels their fears; after which they grow familiar and desire another song: The hermit then sings of the formation of the world, the flood, and several other articles of sacred history.

IN Eastern climes, when bloody discord rag'd,

And fiercest war had ev'ry mind engag'd,

When barb'rous Europe first on Asia pour'd†,

And ev'ry age the cruel sword devour'd;

† *On Asia pour'd*]. The crusades took place in the 11th century in consequence of the gross superstition of the age. They imagined that the conquest of the land of Judæa (which they call'd the *holy land*) from the infidels who possessed it, was a most meritorious action, and capable of making an atonement for the greatest transgressions. In consequence of this doctrine being inculcated by the clergy, vast numbers engaged in this expedition, and tho' by their misconduct multitudes perished by the way, 700,000 arrived safe in Asia. The land they went to conquer was turned into a scene of rapine, murder and robbery, and polluted by the most abominable crimes.

Gainst half the world when bloody Jenghiz † came,
 Like wasting whirlwinds or devouring flame,
 While desolation mark'd his steps around,
 And sanguine showers defil'd the slipp'ry ground;
 Then from the ruined Tyre's polluted coasts,
 From wars tumultuous and from banner'd hosts,
 A peaceful hermit took his lonely way,
 And mourn'd the horrid triumphs of the day.

No rev'rend beard this hermit had adorn'd;
 No alms he look'd for, and applause he scorn'd:
 No crazy fancies had his breast inspir'd;
 Nor was his soul by superstition fir'd:
 He would not wildly wander in the wood,
 Or think by cruel stripes to please his God;
 Or madly worship the old martyr's bone,
 The painted image, or the sacred stone;
 But with Celestial Love his bosom glow'd,
 And, to his pow'r, he happiness bestow'd.

† *Bloody Jenghiz*. This was the name of the first Emperor of the Moguls, a nation of Tartars situated northwest from China. In the beginning of the 12th century, he conquered all Tartary, Persia, part of China and India, committing horrid devastations. He was a rigid deist, and had never heard of a temple, church, or any place appropriated to the worship of the Deity more than another.

The wounded foldier oft had blest'd his care,
 His hand had often wip'd the orphan's tear:
 To every man his ready ear would bend;
 To Turks, to Christians, ev'n to foes a friend.
 Say then why left this man his happy seat?
 Could he with danger or misfortune meet?
 Why was he not by all the world carest'd?
 Why was he not with endless riches blest'd?
 This peaceful hermit with no party join'd,
 Against him therefore every sect combin'd;
 A monstrous infidel by Turks proclaim'd,
 An heretic by perverse Christians nam'd,
 Rejected, hated, and his house on fire,
 He fled where chance or wand'ring thoughts inspire.
 "Bring me his head," the raging mufti † cries:
 All hope of heav'n the rigid monk denies;
 "The infidel hath curs'd Caaba's stone;" §
 "On sacred relics he reproach has thrown;"

† *Mufti*]. The chief doctor of the Mahometan law is called by this name; and his power is so great, that even the Sultan himself is said to be in subjection to his commands.

§ *Caaba's stone*]. Among other ridiculous superstitions, the Mahometans have a black stone in Caaba, or temple of Mecca in which they imagine such holiness resides, that they call it *the right hand of God on earth*. They make pilgrimages to it, and kiss it with great devotion. To spe- irreverently of it is instant death.

"Believes not that our prophet went to heav'n;"
 "The Virgin's image from his house has driv'n,"
 "The faithless wretch drinks wine without controul;"
 "He ev'n contemns the great St Francis' cowl;"
 "Against our Alcoran he makes complaints;"
 "Nay more he ridicules the Pillar-saints."†

Thus on the hermit they reproaches cast,
 And vainly strive his spotless fame to blast;
 Just so this man, if he our days had seen;
 An Atheist, Deist, or some worse had been;
 For he whose mind to party will not bend,
 May search the world, yet never find a friend.

Meantime o'er hills and dales the hermit stray'd,
 Yet tho' he fled, his mind was undismay'd.
 As rocks resist the winds and stormy flood,
 So firm his soul confided in his God.

† *Pillar Saints.*]. This was one of the most ridiculous superstitions that ever disgraced human nature. In the sixth or seventh century some enthusiasts took it in their heads to pass all their life time on the tops of pillars, in order to shew their superior sanctity. One of these pretended saints, named Simeon, first took up his lodging on the top of a pillar six cubits high, but, as his sanctity increased, he increased also the height of his pillar, till at last he had augmented it to the height of 60 cubits. On this pillar he lived 37 years. The superstition continued in vogue for more than 600 years, but was not suffered in Europe.

He sees unmov'd the barren mountains rise,
 The sandy deserts parch'd by burning skies,
 Unmov'd he hears the distant lions roar,
 Sees cruel tigers bound along the shore;
 From him the pois'nous serpent turns away;
 The burning sun sends down a milder ray;
 The roving Arabs find not his retreats;
 No murd'rous foe he on his journey meets:
 For Pow'r's Divine from ev'ry ill defend,
 And Guardian Angels on his steps attend.

Thus many a mountain, many a desert past,
 His wearied feet find rest from toil at last;
 Where to the sea fam'd Indus rolls his tide,
 In different channels where the streams divide,
 A spot sequester'd there the hermit found,
 Secure from war, tho' barren was the ground.
 The sun was hot, but his industrious hands
 Bring distant riv'lets o'er the parched lands;
 He from the mountain guides the purling rills,
 Then quick the barren waste with verdure fills;
 By every stream spontaneous roses spring,
 Their pleasant gifts reviving fruit-trees bring:

Of peace secure, with ample plenty blest,
 Of sweet content, and pleasure full possess,
 With joy his heart exulting ever bounds,
 And praise divine still from his lips resounds.

By chance some exiles from Arabia's coast,
 By adverse winds on stormy ocean tost,
 From their craz'd bark beheld the happy spot
 Where all his cares the hermit had forgot.
 Quick they approach'd, but yet approach'd with fear;
 They thought some fairy or some genie near,
 For sure no man, where summers ever burn,
 Parch'd deserts could to fruitful gardens turn:
 They view with wonder ev'ry fragrant flow'r,
 The loaded fruit-trees, and each shady bow'r;
 Impatient hunger prompts the fruits to eat,
 But yet they fear to touch the genie's meat;
 While doubtful yet they stand, the hermit pours
 His songs of praise at his accustom'd hours;
 The rocks re-echo and the hills rebound,
 And far and wide diffuse th' augmented sound:
 At once ten thousand voices strike their ears,
 They hear, they listen, and give way to fears;

Now, now, they think the dreaded spirit nigh;
 Now all the troop in wild confusion fly;
 Tho' ev'ry one a diff'rent path would chuse,
 To leave his friends commanding fears refuse.
 Thus in a body headlong on they drove,
 Till, quickly past a thick and shady grove,
 They see the hermit, and that instant all
 The crew astonish'd on their faces fall.
 Surpriz'd he starts, but soon he guess'd their fear,
 And bad them rise, nor think a foe was near.
 If ought they wanted here, they might command
 All the long labours of his patient hand:
 Or with him stay, and share his peaceful rest,
 And be no more with cares or labour prest.
 His welcome voice with joy reviv'd they hear,
 And soon they feasted and forgot their care;
 Then grown familiar, and their fears dispers'd,
 Their fright with mirth and laughter they rehears'd;
 Another song then bade the hermit sing,
 And to assist him all his echoes bring.
 Pleas'd he complies, and soon he took his seat
 Before the rocks which in a circle meet;

Whence wond'rous echoes to the skies arise;
Ten thousand fold the sound augmented lies,
All in a circle round th' impatient band,
With eager ears, already wond'ring stand;
But when he sung, then, lost in deep amaze,
They all confounded on each other gaze:
Not all the Muses whom Parnassus boasts,
Not far-fam'd Orpheus from the Thracian coasts,
Nor fabled wonders which Silenus sung,
Could match the accents of the hermit's tongue.
He sung how, first, Jehovah silence broke;
How earth and heav'n he to existence spoke;
He form'd the light and bade the breezes blow;
Then dried the land, confin'd the seas below;
Bade herbs and fruit-trees from the ground arise;
Then form'd the sun, and plac'd him in the skies;
He bade the stars and changing moon appear,
To tell the seasons of the circling year.
Of living creatures next the hermit sung;
How fish from waters, beasts from earth have sprung;
But man, the last, the noblest work of Heav'n,
To him alone a form divine was giv'n.



From Eden next he sung the exil'd pair,
 Now doom'd to labour, sorrow, and to care;
 A vi'lent stubborn race accurs'd succeeds,
 Whose crimes bring vengeance on their guilty heads;
 With grief Jehovah view'd them from on high,
 Then cried in wrath, " Let every creature die!
 " On these accurs'd let floods impetuous fall,
 " And let one boundless deluge swallow all."
 Swift from its bosom, air the vapour pours,
 Condens'd, the vapour falls in heavy show'rs;
 O'er all the heav'n thick clouds of darkness roll,
 And wat'ry mists involve each frozen pole;
 No more the north is hid beneath its snows,
 In streams dissolv'd the icy mountain flows;
 Volcanoes now no more emit their fires,
 By crackling waters drown'd the flame expires;
 With streams immense the shorten'd river swells;
 No more Euphrates or the Nile excels;
 O'er ev'ry steep tremendous cat'racts pour,
 And riv'lets swell'd like Amazoné roar,
 The sea advances, and each stream recoils;
 Far o'er the land victorious Ocean boils;

For Pow'r Divine unlocks its secret springs,
 And solid earth its wat'ry treasures brings.
 Beyond all bounds the swelling waters rise,
 To meet the floods descending from the skies.
 The human race in mad confusion gaze,
 Despairing, shiv'ring, lost in wild amaze,
 This way and that, with fruitless haste they fly;
 They slide, they fall, they sink, lament and die.
 In vain the beasts climb up the rocky steep;
 Bird after bird falls in the boundless deep;
 The waters hide the lofty mountain's head,
 And one vast sea proclaims Creation dead.

Yet not unmindful of his promis'd grace
 To righteous Noah and his chosen race,
 The ark rides safe on seas without a shore,
 No waves assail, nor blust'ring tempests roar;
 Th' Almighty word the water's rage restrains,
 The hills appear, his wind then dries the plains;
 Its wonted face to Nature is restor'd,
 And men with joy adore their sov'reign Lord.

Next sings the hermit of Jehovah's ire
 On wretched Sodom pour'd in flaming fire;
 Of righteous Joseph by his brethren fold,
 And Jacob of his son's perferment told,
 Of Isr'els bondage and of Pharaoh's rage,
 Who with th' Almighty war would madly wage;
 Beneath the waters whelm'd with all his hosts,
 Their bodies wither on the sandy coasts.
 Of tyrants Isr'el then freed from the dread,
 Thro' pathless deserts are to Sinai led,
 That thence a fiery law they might receive,
 That all might hear, and might their God believe.
 Jehovah then on Sinai's top descends,
 Beneath his feet the Empyrean bends;
 Enormous thunders rend the burning skies,
 Thro' air's expanse the livid lightning flies,
 From mouths unseen tremendous voices flow,
 And dreadful trumpets unremitting blow;
 Then Sinai shakes, then trembling mountains nod,
 And own the presence of Almighty God.

The hermit sung of stubborn Korah's fate,
 Of Balak's, and of perverse Balaam's hate;

Of Jephthah's rashness, and of Samson's strength
 By female wiles and fraud oppress'd at length:
 Of David's prowess, and the peaceful reign
 Of Solomon throughout his rich domain;
 Of holy prophets by their brethren kill'd,
 Till of her sins the measure Isr'el fill'd.
 Fast in her footsteps perverse Judah treads,
 No warning takes, nor heav'nly vengeance dreads,
 Till like a deluge Babylonia pours,
 And spreads her terrors o'er the wasted shores:
 Of sev'nty years the desert land lay waste;
 How Daniel in lions den was cast:
 Yet safe, unhurt, like Shadrach in the fire,
 His God preserv'd him though his foes expire:
 By grace divine then Judah, brought again,
 From cruel foes a long respite obtain;
 But at the last this scene of wonder ends,
 And on the earth Jehovah's self descends;
 In form a man, but more than mortal mild;
 In all his ways divine complacence smil'd:
 In him the brightness of the Godhead shone,
 Yet hated and rejected by his own:

Though all their ills and sicknesses he bore;
 He heal'd the maim'd and dried the wasting fore;
 The deaf he cur'd, the blind to sight restor'd;
 And raging tempests own'd him as their Lord
 Yea ev'n the strong unerring shafts of death
 Were turn'd aside by his blest heav'nly breath;
 He from th' enormous tyrant took his prey,
 And on clos'd eyes he pour'd the gladfome day;
 Amazing patience, truth, and love divine,
 And heav'nly wisdom in his conduct shine;
 Till, all his works and all his labours past,
 Betray'd he willing sinks to death at last,
 The Sun was darken'd, all Creation groan'd;
 And trembling Earth its maker's death bemoan'd.
 Yet, at that moment, all his Father's love
 On wretched man descended from above.
 Not long the Son by Stygian pow'rs was held,
 Nor 'gainst him long the gates of hell prevail'd;
 Soon were the bands of vanquish'd death unloos'd,
 No more the all-devouring grave oppos'd;
 To pow'rs divine the grisly tyrant yields,
 Thenceforth his dart he unavailing wields.

The Son triumphant to high heav'n ascends,
 And to him ev'ry mighty Angel bends;
 In earth and sea all pow'rs confess him Lord,
 And life unbounded is to man restor'd.

What shall I sing. ----- Of all the pow'rs of heav'n,
 To sinful man in ample measure giv'n;
 How fishers wretched, naked, and despis'd,
 Were more than kings or mighty princes priz'd;
 On them how all the pow'rs celestial flow'd,
 And heav'nly wisdom in their bosoms glow'd?
 Or shall I sing how cruel pagans rag'd:
 Or how the world to conquer truth engag'd;
 How bloody Mah'met with polluted breath,
 O'er Eastern nations pour'd a double death;
 While o'er the rest blind superstition reigns;
 Or ruthless Deists share the curst domains;
 Till lost, bewilder'd, and on ruin's brink,
 In deepest darkness wretched nations sink?
 An Angel then from highest heav'n descends,
 From pole to pole his ample pow'r extends,

The glorious sign† of wrath appear'd he wears,
 And like the mid-day sun his face appears,
 His voice tremendous as the lion's roar,
 One foot on sea he sets, and one on shore;
 His radiant feet like fiery pillars burn,
 To God the nations at his presence turn:
 A little book, held in his mighty hand,
 Diffuses knowledge wide o'er ev'ry land.
 Then, Satan bound, no more the nations strive
 To quench the flame which Jesus keeps alive;
 Then ev'ry pow'r of superstition falls,
 Then all the world on blest Jehovah calls;
 Till, from the pit, the fiend at freedom flies:
 And o'er the world his pow'r again he tries:
 The wretched nations, by his wiles deceiv'd,
 Again blaspheme the truth they once believ'd;
 As sands unnumber'd Atheists mad surround
 The saints encamp'd and all the holy ground;
 But vengeance swift on them th' Almighty pours,
 And fire from heav'n their stubborn host devours,
 No common tempest on these wretches flows,
 As pow'r divine a guilty land o'erthrows.

† The Rainbow. Sec Rev. chap. x.

But one vast ruin Nature's face appalls,
 O'er ev'ry land the fiery deluge falls.
 Now sinks the sun and lost in darkness dies;
 The moon and stars fall from the trembling skies;
 No more the thunders or the whirlwinds rage,
 Or adverse clouds in horrid war engage:
 For thunder's voice is lost in pow'r divine,
 And pointless lightnings now forget to shine.
 Convolv'd like scrolls depart the fleeting skies,
 And ev'n the strong Electric Ether dies:
 Now all the pillars of high heav'n dissolve,
 No more the planets or the earth revolve,
 Like morning dreams the wide creation flies;
 Enchanted visions thus delude the eyes.
 In all his beauty now the Godhead shines,
 And happy man no more at fate repines:
 From death's dark caverns souls unnumber'd pour
 To join their bodies in that happy hour;
 Immortal vigour now each mortall crowns,
 And fell corruption man at length disowns;
 Death and his sons consum'd at once expire;
 The Serpent burns in everlasting fire;

Another earth now rises to the view,
 And other plans the happy race pursue;
 Now tears and sorrow, pain, fly far away;
 And other heav'ns pour everlasting day.

Of all these wonders thus the hermit sung,
 While with his voice the hills and valleys rung.
 Th' admiring crowd th' Almighty God ador'd,
 And bow'd before the ever living Lord.

TRANSLATION

OF

THE SIXTH ECLOGUE OF VIRGIL

SILENUS.

THE ARGUMENT.

Two youths, Chromis and Mnasilus find the demigod Silenus asleep in a cave. They bind him with his own garlands, and are joined by Ægle one of the Naiads; upon which Silenus, waking, sings most melodiously of the origin of the world, and the most remarkable of the heathen fables.

IN Syracusan strains Thalia sung
To me, the first of all the rural throng;
Nor in the forests, or the shady groves,
She blush'd to dwell and sing of rural loves.
But when I sung of Discord's dire alarms,
Of mighty princes and of heroes' arms,
With pity Phoebus view'd my rash career,
And thus he gently whisper'd in my ear:
"Let other themes, O Tityrus! employ
"Thy rural muse. It suits a shepherd-boy

“In softer strains, of fleecy flocks to sing,

“And leave the horrors which from discord spring?”

Now I, since others mean to sound your praise,

O Varus! in sublime, majestic lays,

Or wasteful terrors of the war rehearse,

Will sing of humbler themes in rustic verse.

Yet though to Phoebus' heav'nly voice I yield,

And leave the glories of the martial field;

If lo'e of rustic verse the reader draws,

And crowns my humble strains with wish'd applause:

From ev'ry grove thy praises shall resound,

And Varus' name on ev'ry tree be found:

Nor song is lov'd by fair Apollo more

Than those with Varus' name inscrib'd before.

Go on, Ye Muses! In the darksome shade

By gloomy caverns in the mountain made,

Chromis and Mnasilus Silenus found

Opprest with sleep, and stretch'd upon the ground:

With wine, as usual, swell'd was ev'ry vein:

Far off his garlands on the ground remain;

Yet only fall'n; by feet they were not soil'd:

Nor by the ground their beauty was defil'd.

Hard by was hung, the drunkard to adorn,
 A monstrous tankard, with the handle worn.
 The youths attack'd him, (oft he had deceiv'd
 Them both with hopes of song, and left them griev'd);
 But now asleep, and unresisting found,
 They held him fast, and with his garlands bound.
 To them yet frighten'd, beauteous Egle came,
 The fairest nymph that boasts a Naiad's name;
 And as the sot his eye-sight just regain'd,
 His face with purple Mulb'ry's juice she stain'd.
 Laughing, he cries, What do your fetters mean?
 Loose me, my boys! suffice it I am seen:
 Now hear the song you wish'd: I'll sing to you;
 But other gifts are to fair Egle due;
 Silenus said; and then began his song.
 O then you might have seen a joyful throng
 Of Fauns and satyrs, and wild beasts, advance,
 Ev'n harden'd oaks on tops of mountains dance.
 Parnassian rocks not thus Apollo fires;
 Nor Orpheus snowy Rhodope admires;
 Nor Ismarus: for old Silenus sung
 How all things from the void immense have sprung;

The seeds of life, of earth, and of the seas;
 Of liquid Ether, and the fleeting breezes
 To these how first their principles gave birth,
 And next was form'd the tender globe of earth
 To harden then began the solid ground;
 Extended Ocean sought his bed profound
 Thus all the world was form'd by slow degrees
 The new-made sun the earth with wonder sees
 How from the clouds on high the waters pour,
 And thick descends the sweet refreshing shower.
 Then first the waste the lofty forest fills,
 The scatter'd beasts move o'er the unknown hills.
 Then Pyrrha throws the stones, and Saturn reigns,
 Prometheus pilfers from the blest domain;
 But dreadful punishments his crime succeed,
 Caucasian vultures on his entrails feed;
 Next at what spring, for beautiful Hylas lost,
 The Argonauts lament the Ocean cross;
 In vain they mourn, the youth they see no more,
 Though Hylas! Hylas! sounds along the shore.
 He sung the beastly love of Minos' queen,
 How happy she if herds had never been!

Pasiphae, wretch! ah woman more than mad!
Ah, in a bull's embraces wast thou glad!
Lo Proetus' daughters, of their wits depriv'd,
Ne'er at such monstrous wickedness arriv'd,
Tho' strong delusions on their fancies wrought,
Transform'd to cows their beauteous forms they thought,
And with false lowings fill'd the verdant field:
Did they their bodies to the cattle yield,
Tho' for their necks the yoke they vainly dread,
And each seeks horns upon her tender head?
Unhappy wretch! now wander o'er the hills,
And seek your lover as he tastes the rills,
Or ruminates beneath the pleasant shade,
Or from your eyes to some large flock is led:
Tell the Dictæan nymphs to find your love,
To watch the forests, and snit ev'ry grove,
While he, regardless of your am'rous vows,
O shame to woman! seeks Gortynian cows,
Next sings the God of Atalanta's charms,
By golden fruit won to her lover's arms;
Then Phaeton's unhappy sisters' fate:
On them nor death, nor dire diseases wait;

But moss and bitter bark their limbs surround;
 Tall poplars now they rivet in the ground.
 Then Gallus, wand'ring where Permessus glides,
 The muse to fair Aonian mountains guides;
 How to the man rose Phœbus' sacred band;
 How all the heav'nly sisters wond'ring stand:
 In strains divine him Linus thus address,
 His hair while flow'rs and mournful parsley press.
 " Accept, says he, these reeds the muses give,
 " Of old which caus'd ev'n woods and forests live;
 " On these th' Ascrean sage was wont to sing,
 " And rigid ash-trees from the mountains bring.
 " On these, since him the heav'nly muses love,
 " Shall Gallus sing whence the Grynean grove,
 " That of no place may fair Apollo boast
 " More than this grove, which yet he loves the most."
 What shall I add? shall I my verse prolong
 With all the wonders which Silenus sung?
 Of Nisan Scylla in the seas profound,
 Tho' fair, with barking monsters compass'd round:
 Ulyse's ships approach'd the fatal shore;
 Her wat'ry dogs the hapless sailors tore.

The ships, 'tis said, on rocks of Scylla hurl'd,
 Were next round fierce Charybdis' circles whirl'd.
 Or shall I sing of Tereus' direful feast?
 For him the dishes Philomela drest?
 How he, all chang'd, with wings unusual flies,
 And with what swiftness to the desert hies?
 Or of the horrors which his bosom felt
 When flutt'ring o'er the house where once he dwelt?
 All these of old which blest Eurotas heard,
 (When heav'nly Phoebus on his banks appear'd,
 And sweetly sung, and bade the laurels learn)
 The youths in old Silenus' song discern:
 The sound reecho'd from the valleys flies,
 Mounts on the winds, and rises to the skies;
 Till to their folds the fleecy flocks are driv'n,
 And Vesper rises in unwilling heav'n.

With all the wonders which Silenus sang,
 Of Nilus Scyllis in the seas profound,
 The fair, with barking monsters compass'd round;
 Ulysses' ship approach'd the fatal shore;
 Her wary dogs the hapless sailors tore.